A VINDICATION

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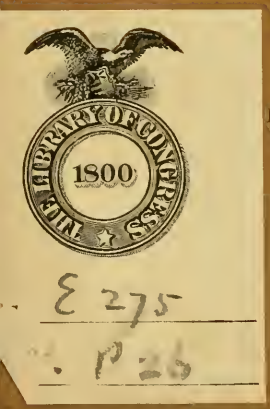
OF

GENERAL SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS

AGAINST THE CHARGE OF TREASONABLE CORRESPONDENCE
DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

BY HON. GEO. B. LORING.

FROM THE MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY FOR OCTOBER, 1888, WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING LETTERS FROM GEN. W. T. SHERMAN, HON. CHAS. J. MCCURDY AND CHAS. A. HALL, ESQ.



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PRINTED AT THE SALEM PRESS
SALEM, MASS.
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In Exch.

Wis Hist Soc

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DEDICATED TO

GEN. W. T. SHERMAN

who represents by inheritance the loyalty and patriotism of Connecticut and Ohio, to whose civil organization Samuel Holden Parsons devoted his courage and fidelity as a soldier and his wisdom as a jurist and statesman.

LETTER OF VINDICATION.

Salem, Mass., August 10, 1888.

To Mrs. Martha J. Lamb

Editor of the Magazine of American History.

The appearance in your magazine for October, 1883, and in subsequent numbers, of "Sir Henry Clinton's Original Secret Record of Private Daily Intelligence" has attracted great attention among American historians, and has seriously injured the reputation of General Samuel Holden Parsons whose name and conduct are frequently referred to by W. Heron in letters addressed to the commander of the British forces in New York during the early part of the year 1781. The celebrations of the settlement of Marietta in 1883 and 1888 have brought the name of General Parsons conspicuously before the public, and opened discussion with regard to the inculpatory letters discovered in the Clinton record. These letters have been accepted in important quarters as conclusive of General Parsons' guilt. Several attempts have been made to vindicate him, but they have not been complete on account of the absence of sufficient documentary evidence. I have endeavored, however, to present his true and loyal record from unpublished letters in the U. S. State Department from the Trumbull letters which have been courteously

opened for use in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, from a few letters offered for sale, and from authentic histories.

Among the distinguished officers in the American Army of the Revolution, General Parsons of Connecticut was conspicuous and useful during the war. He was a son of the Rev. Jonathan Parsons, a strong-minded and influential New England minister, who was born in Springfield, Mass., in 1705, was graduated at Yale in 1729, and was pastor of the Congregational church in Lyme, Conn., in 1731–'45, having adopted the Armenian form of faith. Having become a follower and friend of Whitfield he removed to Newburyport, where he joined the great preacher in his labors, gave him a home in his declining years and preached his funeral sermon. He died in 1776 just at the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, when his son Samuel Holden was nearly forty years old, and was engaged in the active service of life to which he brought the strong intellectual and moral qualities he had inherited from his father.

General Parsons was graduated at Harvard in 1755, studied law under his uncle Gov. Matthew Griswold, was admitted to the bar in 1759, settled as a lawyer in Lyme, Conn., and entered at once upon important civil service. He was in the state assembly eighteen sessions, an influential member engaged in supporting many measures of interest to the commonwealth, and in adjusting difficulties with the adjoining states. He originated the plan of forming the first congress which prepared the way for organizing the continental congress. In 1773 he removed to New London and was a member of the Committee of Correspondence. During these years of active civil life he had turned his attention somewhat to military affairs and "on 26 April, 1775, he was appointed Colonel of the

6th regiment stationed at Roxbury, Mass., until the British evacuated Boston, and then ordered to New York."

Having obtained from Benedict Arnold an account of the condition of Ticonderoga, he projected a plan for the capture of the fort; and, without consulting the civil authorities of the state of Connecticut, he obtained money from the treasury to defray the expenses of the expedition on his own receipt, called Ethan Allen with New Hampshire recruits to his aid, was strengthened by volunteers from Berkshire, Mass., and captured the fortress. He participated in the battle of Long Island in 1776, was commissioned as brigadier general for gallant service, served at Harlem Heights and White Plains and was stationed at Peekskill to protect the important post on North River. "He planned the expedition to Sag Harbor and reënforced Washington in New Jersey." He commanded the troops in the Highlands in 1778–79, at a time when Gen. Rufus Putnam constructed the fortifications at West Point. He prevented the incursion of the British into Connecticut; was one of the board that tried Maj. John Andrè; was commissioned as major general in 1780, succeeded Gen. Israel Putnam and served until the close of the war. During all this period he held the entire confidence of Washington, was in constant correspondence with him, and coöperated with all his military operations in and around New York. Col. Humphreys the scholar and poet of the American Army, the brave soldier, the favorite and confidential friend of Washington, in his poem on "The Happiness of America," says of Parsons :–

> "I too . . . . . .
> Shall tell from whom I learned the martial art,
> With what high chiefs I played my early part,
> With Parsons first, whose eye with piercing ken
> Reads through their hearts, the characters of men."

At the close of the war he resumed the practice of law at Middletown, Conn., was appointed by Congress a Commissioner to treat with the Miami Indians in 1785; was an active member of the State Constitutional Convention in 1788, and the same year was appointed by Washington the first judge of the Northwest territory. He was an active and efficient member of the Ohio Company and joined Manasseh Cutler and Rufus Putnam in organizing the settlement of Marietta. For all this long life of civil and military service he was deemed worthy of an elaborate sketch in Hildreth's Pioneers of Ohio; he was counted among the wise leaders of the Colony in the oration which I delivered at Marietta on the ninety-fifth anniversary of the settlement of Ohio, and was referred to as "a son of a most learned and pious minister of Massachusetts, a sagacious companion of Washington, one of the foremost and ablest citizens of this state of his adoption."

He was also eulogized by the Hon. George F. Hoar in his centennial oration on the same spot, in which he spoke of him as "soldier, scholar, judge, one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned, who first suggested the Continental Congress, from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War."

Of this American patriot and statesman who has been considered worthy of this honorable record for nearly a century, the Cyclopædia of American Biography, recently published, says :–

"It has recently been discovered in a letter that is preserved in the manuscript volume of Sir Henry Clinton's original record of daily intelligence, now in the library of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet of New York City, that Gen.

Parsons was in secret communication with Sir Henry Clinton, and that one William Heron, a representative from Fairfield in the Connecticut legislature was the intermediary to whom Parsons wrote letters which with the knowledge of their author were sent to the enemy's headquarters. Under date of July 8, 1781, he wrote:

'The five regiments of our states are more than 1,200 men deficient of their complement, the other states (except Rhode Island and New York who are fuller) are nearly in the same condition. Our magazines are few in number. Your fears for them are groundless. They are principally at West Point, Fishkill, Wapping Creek and Newburg, which puts them out of the enemy's power, except they attempt their destruction by a force sufficient to secure the Highlands, which they cannot do, our guards being sufficient to secure them from small parties. The French troops encamped yesterday on our left, near the Tuckahoe road. Their number I have not had an opportunity to ascertain. Other matters of information I shall be able to give you in a few days.' This letter was sent by Heron to Maj. Oliver DeLancey, to whom Heron wrote that he had concerted measures with Parsons by which he would receive every material article of intelligence from the American camp. Parsons' treason is also corroborated by Revolutionary papers of Major John Kissam of the British Army."

And Winsor, in a foot-note, in the Narrative and Critical History of the U. S., speaks of Parsons as "a spy for the British Army."

The letter to Heron, upon which the charge of treason against Gen. Parsons is made to hang, is included in a long list of letters written by Heron to Sir Henry Clinton, and is capable of two interpretations. Had it been written to Washington it would have been received as a friendly

communication stating the weakness of both sides, the American and the English — and of no great value as an account of either. On its very face it bears this interpretation. But Heron, after repeated promises that he could enlist Gen. Parsons in the British cause against his own country, offers this letter to the enemy as a contribution of Parsons to the British commander, written as to a "confidential friend" in order to disguise its purpose. Heron had promised for six months to enlist Parsons as an English ally and his promise had not been fulfilled; and so on July 15, 1781, he wrote to Major DeLancey announcing that "our friend" (Parsons) "was ready to convey all intelligence in accordance with a conversation between himself (Heron) and DeLancey in form of "queries and answers," April 25, and stating that Parsons would write to a "confidential friend" who could use the information as he pleased.

The queries were: –

1. The state of the Army.
2. The state of the French.
3. How each army is situated.
4. What enterprises they mean to undertake.
5. What supplies, and whence do they expect to subsist.
6. Where the magazines are and how to be destroyed.
7. The movement of the French fleet and their intentions.
8. News from the southward of consequence.
9. Situation of the different posts.
10. News from Europe.
11. The hopes of the ensuing campaign.

All of which Heron answers with great caution.

And in order to prove Parsons' fidelity Heron announced

his desire to obtain a place for his son in the British Navy. Heron says also that he came under the sanction of a commission from Gov. Trumbull to cruise in the Sound, and that he entered upon the expedition "purely to draw in our *friend*," who was not in after six months of Heron's efforts and written promises to Clinton. In this letter Heron enclosed Parsons' letter of July 8, to himself, which the Cyclopædia publishes as proof of Parsons' disloyalty.

The letter from Lt. Col. DeWurmb to Major Kissam, April 23, 1781, also referred to in the Cyclopædia is as follows:

"Sir: I enclose a passport for Mr. Heron and should wish for his return to Stamford whenever the wind will permit it. I have not as yet received answer from New York, but as soon as those things wanted by General Parsons shall arrive I will forward them to the General by another flag. I have the honor to be

DEWURMB."

We are not informed what "those things" were, nor is there any further reference to them.

The correspondence between Heron and Sir Henry Clinton and DeLancey, which ended with Heron's letter of July 15, 1781, commenced Sept. 21, 1780, in a letter written to Clinton, giving an account of affairs in America and setting forth the value of his extraordinary opportunities for observing the condition of those affairs.

Feb. 4, 1781, Heron wrote again to Sir Henry Clinton giving an account of the convention in Hartford to found a coalition between the Eastern and York counties, stating what Parsons and Stark represented to him with regard to the wretched condition of the American army and the small number of the troops in the Highlands; and cautioned Clinton against those who would deceive him, at the same time repeating that he had special chances for knowing the secrets of the cabinet.

Heron's statement, in this letter, of the opinions of Parsons and Stark with regard to the condition of the American army, is merely a repetition of what Parsons had already reported to Washington.

March 11, 1781, Heron writes: "Gen. Parsons' aid-de-camp, whose name is Lawrence, is soliciting leave to come in to see his mother. He thinks it is in our power to tamper with him and that from Parsons' mercenary disposition there is little doubt of success."

April 24, 1781, Heron wrote to Major DeLancey setting forth elaborately his delicate negotiations with Parsons, in which he had informed him of an interview with a New York gentleman in which Parsons was highly complimented. He added that Parsons listened with uncommon attention, and considered that it might be best that he should resign his commission in the American army in order to give greater effect to his services for Clinton. He continues his letter by stating: "I have been necessitated to use all this circumlocution in order to convince him of the delicacy observed in making the above propositions and that nothing was intended inconsistent with the purest principles of honor." He desired also "to secure himself a retreat" should the matter be "disagreeable to Parsons."

The next morning having "renewed his conversation" with General Parsons, he adds: "I shall be in situation this summer (I hope) to render essential service, having carried my election against Judge Sanford who is of one of the first families in the place."

A note to this letter, made by DeLancey, gives a memorandum of the points Heron promises to get from General Parsons, such as the exact state of West Point; what troops; what magazines; who commands.

"Hiram," a signature assumed by Heron, is to let Sir Henry know what Parsons' wish is and "how we can serve

him." Heron makes "no doubt of bringing Parsons to do what we wish."

About this time Heron wrote an account of the route taken by the French troops, which he said he had thus early from General Parsons, "who had it from the French officers."

June 17, 1781, Heron wrote that General Parsons assisted him in reaching New York at that time and concerted measures for their future conduct with regard to conveying such intelligence as might come to his knowledge, but expressing still a doubt as to how far "intriguing persons" could be relied on; adding, "I find the gentleman in question will not say he will go such length as I could wish,"—meaning General Parsons.

July 15, 1781, Heron wrote the letter already quoted which he used as a vehicle for conveying the letter of a "confidential friend," the form in which, according to agreement with Sir Henry Clinton, information was hereafter to be conveyed to him by Heron.

In this correspondence which had continued with some regularity for five months from Feb. 4 to July 15, with the one exception of Sept. 21, 1780, Heron appears as a spy and an informer whether for General Parsons or for Sir Henry Clinton, contemporaneous events and correspondence alone can show. That he was not a sympathizer with the American cause was well known. Todd, in the history of Redding, says of him, "in the revolution he sided with the king and was the recognized leader of the Tories of Redding Ridge. At the time of Tryon's invasion he openly gave aid and comfort to the enemy." He is recorded as an "enemy of the Declaration of Independence." At the same time he was a member of the Connecticut legislature in 1778, 1779, 1780, 1781, from 1784 to 1790, and in 1795 and 1796. "His position brought him in per-

sonal relations with the leading men of Connecticut and he was in full correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton." "He stands well with the officers of the continental army — with General Parsons he is intimate, and is not suspected;" says General Robertson of the British army. So far as Sir Henry Clinton is concerned, the value of his services were exceedingly small. The facts he furnished with regard to the American army were few and well known to all. He never succeeded in committing General Parsons to the enemy; on the contrary, when asked by Major DeLancey, Jan. 20, 1781, "Is it your opinion that General Parsons will enter so heartily as to make us hope he will take an open and determined stand in our favor?" he replies, "It is my opinion that he does not wish to take an open and above-board part at present." He records no treasonable act of Parsons, and the only communication he secured from him was the "confidential friend" letter which might or might not have been intended for the eye of Sir Henry Clinton.

There is abundant evidence, however, that he was acting as a spy and an informer for General Parsons and the Commander-in-chief of the American army, who were constantly using the information secured by American spies. Washington, through Captain Walker, one of his agents, was informed that great numbers from Connecticut "are removing to the state of Vermont," which was a place of refuge; and he wrote to General Parsons Feb. 22, 1781, as follows:— "Your knowledge of the country and character of the people will enable you best to conduct the investigation and as you live in one of the counties where it seems to originate you may do it with less risk of suspicion. I have therefore to request that you will undertake the affair and in the manner you think most likely to succeed and will set about it immediately. The person who

will serve you as a spy must be assured of some generous compensation such as would be an object to his family and secure his fidelity."

In his reply to this dated March 14, 1781, General Parsons sets forth elaborately the state of the case to which Washington refers. He believes an association is formed to submit to the British government; that the number of associates is daily increasing; that their names are transmitted to New York as often as opportunity presents; that persons are employed to enlist these men; that regular stages of intelligence are established from the shores through the country to Canada; that despatches have lately gone through these channels to Vermont. He thinks it will be difficult to detect the plan in its extent. He enlarges upon the magnitude and danger of the conspiracy and upon the fact that great numbers in many towns are supplying the enemy with provisions, and are demoralizing the young men about them; suggesting that it is difficult to deal with the evil which has taken so deep root. He informs Washington that the state has passed stringent laws against all who come into the state for plunder, and asks how he shall proceed under the circumstances. He concludes his letter as follows:

"The spy employed among them has assurances of generous pay for all the time he employs and expenses incurred in the service, or a handsome gratuity when he has done what he can, to be settled in some more secure plan if he is detected and obliged to fly from his present settlement (which will be the case if he is discovered), and if he succeeds in discovering the full extent of the plan, so that the concerned may be detected and it shall prove to be as extensive as is supposed he shall be gratified with an annuity of one hundred dollars per annum for life, as a reward for his services. I believe him faithful and industrious in making discoveries necessary."

On April 20, 1781, he wrote to Washington: "The person on whom our principal dependence is placed has been very faithful and employed almost the whole time in the service; and been at considerable expense which by reason of his indigent circumstances he is unable to support. I must, therefore, beg Your Excellency to order him to be paid."

It is altogether probable that these communications referred to Heron of whom he wrote the following letter to General Washington, dated Danbury, Apr. 6, 1782.

"Dear General: When last with you I forgot to mention the name of Mr. William Heron of Redding who has for several years had opportunities of informing himself of the state of the enemy, their designs and intentions with more certainty and precision than most men who have been employed; as I have now left service I think it my duty to inform Your Excellency of this person, and my reasons for believing him more capable of rendering service that way than most people are, that he may be employed if necessary.

He is a native of Ireland, a man of very large knowledge, and a great share of natural sagacity, united with a sound judgment; but of as unmeaning a countenance as any person in my acquaintance. With this appearance he is as little suspected as any man can be; an officer in the department of the Adjutant General; is a countryman and very intimate acquaintance of Mr. Heron, through which channel he has been able frequently to obtain important and very interesting intelligence; that he has had access to some of their secrets a few facts will show beyond a doubt. Your Excellency will remember I informed you of the contents of a letter you wrote to Virginia which was intercepted a year ago but not published. This letter his friend shew him of the descent made last year on New London, I was informed by him and made a written representation of it to the Governor and Council three days before it took place. This he had through the same channel. He has frequently brought me the most accurate descriptions of the posts occupied by the enemy and more rational accounts of their numbers, strength and designs than I have been able to obtain in any other way. As to his character I know him to be a consistent national whig; he is always in the field on every alarm and has in every trial proved himself a man of bravery; he has a family and a considerable interest in this state and from the beginning of the war has invariably followed the measures of the country. I might add as a circumstance of his fidelity his delivering a letter from General Arnold to Major Andrè to

me instead of bearing it where it was directed, which letter you have. In opposition to this his enemies suggest he carries on an illicit trade with the enemy; but I have lived two years the next door to him and am fully convinced he has never had a single article of any kind for sale during that time, nor do I believe he was in the most distant manner connected with commerce at that time or any subsequent period. I know many persons of more exalted character are also accused, none more than Governor Trumbull nor with less reason. I believe the Governor and Mr. Heron as clear of this business as I am and I know myself to be totally free from everything which has the least connection with that commerce.

I think it my duty to give this full information of his character that if you should think it expedient to employ him you might have some knowledge of the man that you might be better able to satisfy yourself, if you should send for him. I believe on conversation he would give you entire satisfaction. I am, dear General, with the highest esteem,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS."

It is safe to assume that Heron was a professional spy and was looked on by Parsons as such. There is no doubt that through him the Governor of Connecticut knew of Arnold's expedition, three days before it took place. And nowhere do we find that Parsons suspected him of treasonable designs. Heron may have been opposed to the doctrines on which the Revolutionary war was fought; but we find him engaged in the civil service of the State and we may safely class his inconsistencies with the methods adopted by spies in transacting their business. His recorded treason is capable of this interpretation; his alleged treasonable acts are matters of tradition. Todd says: "The history of the Episcopal church in Connecticut informs us that the Redding association of loyalists was a strong body whose secret influence was felt throughout the mission of the venerable pastor." The pastor was the Rev. John Beach, an Episcopal minister of great power, who was settled at Redding Ridge, and who "declared he would

do his duty, preach, and pray for the King till the rebels cut his tongue out." Heron belonged to this church. But we should remember that while in the town of Redding, Hawes and Hirlehigh and Hall and Kane and Kellogg and Lacy and Lane and Lyon and Manrow and Captain Morgan and Perry and the six Platts and Robbins and Seymour and Turner, most of whom were Episcopalians and all of whom were loyalists, were banished and their estates confiscated, Heron remained in civil service throughout the war and retained the confidence and regard of the American officers. Among the Trumbull papers has been found a significant letter of Heron to Parsons which throws additional light on their relation to each other, and on the status of General Parsons:

Jan. 5, 1781, Heron writes to Parsons that one McNeil had written him from New York that he had almost closed the settlement of the late Mr. Thompson's estate, and was ready to pay him a sum due him in compliance with a charge of Thompson on his death-bed. He urges his need of money and wants a flag of truce to get to New York.

The career of Heron, inconsistent as it may appear, is entirely in accordance with that of many men employed in the same service during the Revolutionary war. The confusion of that period can hardly be overstated. The skirmishing battles, the skilful retreats, the endeavors to mislead, the pertinacious courage and defiance of the patriots, the widespread devotion to the King, the indecision of Congress, the worse than indecision of the state legislatures, the discontents and desertions of the army, the suffering of the soldiers starving in the midst of plenty, the desperate system of espionage made tragic by the fate of Hale and Palmer and Andrè, all combined to render any account of many of the events doubtful, and any fair interpretation of them extremely difficult. It may seem that

such espionage as Heron practised is impossible; but even the vivid imagination of Cooper has not overdrawn the picture, in his delineation of Harvey Birch in the Spy. This creation of the fancy was based upon reality. During the war, the "royal cause" gained such preponderance that a secret committee was appointed by Congress for the express purpose of defeating the object of its supporters. In the discharge of the novel duties which devolved on the committee, John Jay, Chairman, "had occasion," Cooper tells us in the introduction to The Spy, "to employ an agent whose services differed but little from those of a common spy . . . . . It was his office to learn in what part of the country the agents of the crown were making their efforts to embody men, to repair to the place, enlist, appear zealous in the cause he affected to serve, and otherwise to get possession of as many of the secrets of the enemy as possible." He was often arrested, "but was permitted to escape; and this seeming, and indeed actual peril was of great aid in supporting his assumed character among the English. By the Americans, in his little sphere he was denounced as a bold and inveterate tory. In this manner he continued to serve his country in secret during the early years of the struggle, hourly environed by danger and the constant subject of unmerited opprobium."

The story of Elisha H——so well told by Cooper in a footnote of The Spy, is familiar to every reader of that thrilling tale. "This person," he says, "was employed by Washington, as one of his most confidential spies. He was allowed to enter into the service of Sir Henry Clinton . . . and he was often intrusted by Washington with minor military movements, in order that he might enhance his value with the English general, by communicating them. In this capacity he ascertained the force and destination of a detachment ordered on an expedition

against the town of Bedford in Westchester county. This he succeeded in communicating to Washington by a note signed with his own initials, E. H., and forwarded by courier, while he remained in New York. The communication was too late, Bedford was taken, the commandant was killed, and the note of E. H. was found on his person. The next day being confronted with the note by Sir Henry Clinton, and asked if he knew the handwriting and who E. H. was, he replied with the quiet and sudden audacity of an accomplished spy of those days, 'it is Elisha Hadden the spy you hanged yesterday at Paulus Hook.' Sir Henry Clinton allowed him to quit his presence and he never saw him afterward."

Espionage in war is considered an imperative necessity; but the risk run by employing it cannot be overestimated, both as regards the fate of the spy and the reputation of his employer. It was by this means that Washington kept himself well informed of the secret designs of British commanders. His spies, unknown to each other, were stationed at every point in New York. They were usually on terms of intimacy with the British officers and were enabled to obtain their information from the most reliable sources; and, had their correspondence been preserved, it is altogether probable that many of them would enjoy a reputation as doubtful as that which Sir Henry Clinton's record of secret correspondence has secured for Heron.

In order to judge of the connection of General Parsons with the correspondence of Heron, it becomes necessary to ascertain the course he was pursuing as an officer while the correspondence was going on. Of his services in the army prior to this time, it is unnecessary to speak; he was known throughout the country as a faithful and devoted supporter of the patriot cause on the field and in council. Of his services during the six months from January to July

1781, we fortunately have a record, not hitherto published, but found largely in his unpublished letters to Washington, filed in the State Department. The part he performed in the events of the six months preceding the correspondence, and during the period in which Heron's letters were written, is well known to have been efficient and honorable. In July, 1780, the French army and navy arrived in Newport and increased the responsibilities and duties of the American army around New York. The campaign was inspired with new vigor; and as the activity increased the difficulties seemed to increase also. Arnold's treason and Andrè's execution as a spy intensified the anxiety of the Americans, and exasperated the British. As the year 1781 opened, mutiny among the Pennsylvania troops broke out in Morristown and threatened the destruction of that line. Six hundred troops were taken from the Highlands and under the command of General Howe were marched to New Jersey to quell an insurrection in the American forces there. The powers of Congress were found to be doubtful and inefficient. Of the condition of the army at this time Washington wrote:—

"Instead of having everything in readiness to take the field we have nothing; and, instead of having the prospect of a glorious offensive campaign before us, we have a bewildered and defensive one unless we should receive a powerful aid of ships, land troops and money from our generous allies, and these at present are too contingent to build upon."

On the soil of Connecticut, at Weathersfield, May 23, a conference took place between the American and French commanders, from which Washington issued a circular letter to the governor of the eastern states making an urgent call for reinforcements an appeal received with great indifference. The invasion of Connecticut and the burn-

ing of New London by Arnold gave a local importance to the trying events which oppressed the country at this time. It was under these circumstances that Heron professed to be able to deliver General Parsons into the hands of Sir Henry Clinton, according to the recently discovered correspondence. At a time when the United French and American forces were preparing to make an attack on New York with every prospect of success, an undertaking which was abandoned by Washington on the arrival of the French forces in the Chesapeake, by whose aid Cornwallis was overpowered; at a time when the clouds began to break, and treason was especially odious and every sentiment of patriotism was roused, General Parsons, who was just appointed by the Governor of Connecticut to command the state troops, is charged with holding treasonable correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton. Of his conduct and his opinions at that time his letters to Washington furnish a complete record, a record as I think of entire vindication.

The spirit of General Parsons is so well illustrated by a correspondence between himself and Tryon a year before the Heron letters commenced, September, 1779, that I am inclined to introduce it here as preliminary to the more important and direct letters to which I have referred. On Jan. 15, 1779, Tryon wrote to General Putnam and General Parsons advising them to make no attempt to prevent a "reunion with the parent state." On Sept. 7, 1779, Parsons, whom Hollister calls "one of the bravest and most accomplished officers of the Revolutionary era," replied, denouncing Tryon's conduct "in the defenceless towns of Connecticut" reminding him of the declaration of war against England by France, of the English disasters in the West Indies, of the storming of Stony Point, of the surprise of Paulus Hook by Major

Lee, of the flight of General Provost from Carolina, and in closing adds, "Surely it is time for Britons to rouse from their delusive dreams of conquest and pursue such systems of future conduct as will save their tottering empire from total destruction." In July, 1779, Washington had directed Parsons to hasten to check Tryon and to guide the efforts of the people to stop him. This service he performed with great energy and skill and with a small force of only 150 contingent troops harassing and opposing Tryon with his well organized troops of 2,600. On Jan. 31, 1781, just at the time when Heron was in active correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton, Washington forwarded to Congress two reports of Major General Parsons and Lieut. General Hull respecting an enterprise against DeLancey's corps at West Chester, in which with small loss on the American side the barracks of the corps were destroyed, and prisoners, cattle and horses were brought off and a bridge burnt. "General Parsons' arrangement were judicious," wrote Washington, "and the conduct of the officers and men is entitled to the highest praise."

The following letters of General Parsons, of which I give in many instances abstracts, cover the entire period of the Heron correspondence, commencing, in fact, a month before any part of that correspondence appears:

Aug. 15, 1780. General Parsons writes to General Arnold requesting an order for Canfield to remove his troops to Horseneck—in great need.

Aug. 2, 1780. Writes a long and important letter from Danbury to Washington, stating the disposition of the troops and the recruits, and adding that the general assembly would undoubtedly at its session next week furnish more men. He also gives some valuable information just received with regard to the movements of the enemy on

Long Island, and Sir Henry Clinton's exploration of the condition of affairs with his own troops; and also with regard to where transports were taking provisions.

Aug. 25, 1780, writes to Arnold that one Walter, a seaman, can obtain valuable information with regard to the enemy in New York, and he can be relied on. Asks Arnold for orders to him to procure a boat and form a regular course of intelligence by the way of Long Island to New York, by which he may get weekly intelligence. This he will undertake for "some certain pay in continental money."

Aug. 25, 1780. Writes to Arnold with regard to Thomas Osborne who had been condemned as a spy and advises that he be held until the statements he has made inculpating many persons more important than himself be investigated.

Sept. 4, 1780. Writes to Arnold asking permission to join his brigade, stating that the volunteers were ready, and asking that the conduct of Captain Sill of Colonel Warner's regiment be inquired into.

Sept. 5, 1780. Writes to Arnold setting forth the effect of Osborne's confinement as good. He proceeds to criticise Congress and says: "The cause of my country I will never forsake; 'tis a just and glorious cause. The virtues of our General will ever attach us to his fortunes. But the wretches who have crept into Congress are almost below contempt; our country will never prosper in their hands. They will starve us in the midst of plenty. To deny us very obvious justice and to insult us when we require it is left only for politicians of the new world. My hand shall be added to any representation my brethren agree to make. I think the insult should not be passed over in silence."

October 4, 1780. Writes to Washington approving of

Smallwood's promotion; but complaining that he himself had been unjustly neglected, having served four years, and half the time commanded a division of the army. "Had the same principles actuated the councils of our states as have been the rules of proceedings in other nations, I should have had the rank due to the command long since conferred upon me."

October 5, 1780, Camp. Writes to Washington asking leave to return to his family on account of sickness, and suggests that he be appointed on his return "to the command of the troops near New Castle and Horseneck, until their service shall expire which I imagine will nearly end my own."

November 12, 1780, Redding. Writes to Washington thanking him for promotion and proposing to adjust his private affairs so that he could join the army again, and sending an act of the Legislature of Connecticut for filling the army, " which if executed with spirit I hope will have the desired success."

November 20, 1780, Redding. Writes to Washington that he has had a return of fever and ague, but will return to the army as soon as possible.

December 25, 1780, Fishkill. Writes to the commander-in-chief asking that Lieutenants Grant and Cook, taken prisoners at Fort Washington, be restored to rank and pay, as if not captured.

January 10, 1781, Camp in the Highlands. Writes asking that a garrison of Virginia or Massachusetts or Maryland or New Hampshire troops be sent to Wyoming, and not Pennsylvania troops of whom the New England settlers were jealous.

January 12, 1781, Camp Highland. He writes to Washington—"Dear General: The instances of firmness in the Connecticut line exhibited among the privates since I had

the honor of seeing you, fully convinces me of the justice of my observations yesterday on that subject; and I believe the same spirit pervades the whole of the line. In two instances application was made this morning for furloughs. The men, privates, who had been three years absent, were informed that in the defection of the Pennsylvania line they would be required to reduce them to their duty; they answered without hesitation they had rather never see home than the cause of their country should suffer by such unjustifiable conduct, or that Your Excellency should be in danger from that or any other misconduct. They went back with great cheerfulness and said they would never apply again until they were brought back to their duty. And in many instances the officers' servants have begged to be armed and permitted to go on this duty. From these circumstances and other observations I am convinced the fullest confidence may in this instance be placed in the Connecticut troops."

The above letter was written only a short time before Heron wrote to Sir Henry Clinton insinuations against Parsons and Stark.

Jan. 23, 1781, Horseneck. Writes to Washington of his success in the expedition to "Sawpitts," Horseneck; and on Jan. 24, of the difficulties of the expedition on account of snow and cold.

Mar. 31, 1781. He writes to Gov. Trumbull (a letter found among the Trumbull papers) stating the extensiveness of those concerned in supplying the enemy and in illicit commerce. He extends his examination to commerce by water as well as by land; and is astonished at the list of inhabitants of Greenwich, Stamford and Norwalk, exposed by the examination. He gives a list of them; and asks how far he is to proceed in apprehending the persons named in the examination.

Mar. 3, 1781. Parsons in another letter to Gov. Trumbull avows knowledge of constant intercommunication between the disaffected scattered from New York to Canada. He says he knows who conveys the intelligence. He states the objections to intermeddling to be a doubt how far force may be employed for the purpose of discovery, and says he is under the most solemn engagements not to disclose the names of spies. He alludes to some slanders against him because he had made some similar disclosures the previous summer.

April 20, 1781. Writes to Washington giving an account of his ill health and advising him that the operations of the disaffected have been brought to a stand, and urging the fitting out of an expedition to Lloyd's neck to cut off the enemy and asks to command it.

April 30, 1781. Writes to Washington of his "still very feeble health;" thinks a considerable check is put to the proceedings of the disaffected; says a report is confidentially circulated among them that the British government "have given assurances to Colonel Allen that the state of Vermont shall be made a separate province if the war terminates in their favor, and that he shall be appointed Governor of the new province;" and concludes by a recommendation of the spy which I have already quoted.

May 2, 1781. Writes to Washington that he has learned from New York that General Arnold was every hour expected there to take command of the expedition (into Connecticut). "Admiral Arbuthnot is going to England, his officers refusing to serve longer with him." Admiral Graves who commands the fleet was in New York Saturday but expects to sail in a few days. Five ships of the line are in the East River, the rest in North River. The fleet with provisions had arrived without loss and the enemy are in high spirits. "Great dependence is placed

on the defection of Vermont; they say their measures are fully secured there and that an army may be expected from Canada soon." No doubt Heron furnished him this information.

June 26, 1781, Peekskill. Writes to Washington of the disaffection of Connecticut troops on account of the failure of the state and the nation to pay them. He writes "by request."

July 10, 1781, Camp, Peekskill. Writes stating the terms on which the officers expect to be paid.

July 10, 1781, Camp near Dobbs' ferry. Writes urging again the paying of the Connecticut troops and says:

"Every other state has done much towards satisfying the just demands of the troops and Connecticut, the best able of any state in the Union, has done nothing."

July 28, 1781. Writes that the inhabitants in the rear of the army are connected with the refugees who are on the roads in the rear and are acting the part of robbers and suggests a remedy.

Autograph letters of General Parsons, written at this period, have recently been sold in Boston by Libbie & Co., exhibiting the same spirit as those I have presented. They are not addressed, but the dates of all are preserved:—

(1) Jan. 1, 1781, he writes from Camp Highland, congratulating a friend on his release and marriage, and giving him notice that he would be called soon into service.

(2) April 9, 1781, he writes to his correspondent, "please to present my compliments to your fellow-prisoners and that obstinate Tory, Parson Walter, my old friend."

(3) May 3, 1781, he writes ordering the seizure of one Willard by a file of soldiers and denounced him as a villain.

(4) May 8, 1781, he writes ordering the execution of

one Rowland and directing the prisoners to attend the execution.

These letters written in 1781, of which that of July 28 to Washington is the last, cover the entire period of the Heron correspondence. The next letter on the file was written May 17, 1782, and announces his retirement from the army on account of "extreme ill health."

To my mind these letters are conclusive with regard to the loyalty of General Parsons. They indicate a spirit of devotion to his country and they record acts in her service. They were evidently written by one who had the entire confidence of Washington, who was not deceived in his estimate of men, and whose suspicions of Parsons had he been in long communication with the enemy would have been roused as they were by the irregularities of Arnold. The spirit which produced these letters was accepted as the true spirit of Parsons throughout the war and secured for him the confidence of his associate officers, Putnam and Hazen and Scammell and Wolcott and Hull and Heath, and of the community in which he lived when the war had ended, and a place in the councils of Manasseh Cutler and Rufus Putnam when they entered upon their great work of settling the northwest territory.

In the diary of Cutler we find General Parsons alluded to often. On March 8, 1787, at a meeting of the Ohio Company held in Boston, Gen. Samuel H. Parsons, Gen. Rufus Putnam and the Rev. Manasseh Cutler were chosen directors to apply to Congress for the purchasing of land. On March 16, 1787, Cutler writes to Nathan Dane, "Gen. Parsons will make application to Congress in the name of the other directors in order to make the purchase for the company." On his journey to New York and Philadelphia he spent an evening with General Parsons, settled all

matters relating to his business with Congress and received many letters from the general to the members. On July 5, 1787, he was ready to support Parsons for Governor, but found that General St. Clair had forestalled him, and consequently urged successfully his appointment as United States judge of the territory. On July 29, 1787, he records with evident satisfaction "when I informed General Parsons of my negotiations with Congress I had the pleasure to find it not only met his approbation but he expressed his astonishment that I had obtained terms so advantageous." On his way from New York to Boston after the negotiation he "dined with Gen. Parsons."

Sept. 18, 1787, he writes that Generals Parsons and Putnam "are to go with 100 men to Ohio." On May 6, 1789, Directors Parsons, Putnam and Griffin Green ordered Putnam and Cutler to apply to Congress for additional purchases. In all the important business of the company Parsons was constantly employed as a wise counsellor and an honest agent and director.

It has been said of him that "all who knew him had supposed that he was a poor man, and to the surprise of every one he had a large amount of ready money to invest in the lands of the company. This was the fifty thousand dollars that Clinton had given him for his services." In answer to this charge I am informed by Douglas Putnam, Esq., a most respectable and venerable citizen of Marietta :—

"I find in the list of the original proprietors in the Ohio Company's purchase the name of Parsons, Samuel H., as the proprietor of 2 shares ;

Parsons, Samuel H.	*Proprietors of*
Parsons, W. W., and others,	*three shares.*

In the division of the lands a share consisted of 1173½ acres (in plots) of which the cost was understood to be $1000 in continental money and $10 specie."

This disposes of the fifty thousand dollars charge.

In conclusion, I place over against Heron's reputation and record and occupation, the services and correspondence and civil and military associations of General Parsons, and rest on them his vindication and his title in our generation to the esteem and confidence he enjoyed in his own.

George B. Loring.

APPENDIX.

LETTER OF HON. CHAS. J. McCURDY.

Lyme, Conn., Oct. 15, 1888.

HON. GEORGE B. LORING.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 10th inst. was duly received. Your vindication of General Parsons is exhaustive and conclusive, and I am glad that it is to be published in a pamphlet form; not only his family and friends but our states must feel under obligation to you for it.

As you were aware that I had taken much interest in the matter and had once begun a similar article, you ask if I would like to add a supplementary letter. It would be close gleaning where you had reaped. But one or two points I would respectfully make, arising chiefly from the internal evidence of the Heron letters alone. It is known that General Washington kept direction of the "Spy bureau" exclusively in his own hands. On the twenty-second of February, 1781, he wrote to General Parsons a confidential letter requesting him to employ a spy and promise him a generous compensation. On the fourteenth of March following, General Parsons answered that the spy employed had an assurance of generous pay. When General Washington wrote, Heron was undoubtedly in the British service and was at the same time on intimate terms with General Parsons, for he says in his letter of Feb. 4, 1781, "I spent a part of the night with Gen. Parsons and another with Gen. Stark" and am "intimate with both."

This letter is long and minute and there is no hint of any defection of General Parsons, and there is no intimation of the kind until his letter of the twenty-fourth of April following; so that the evidence from the sequence of the dates is that on the twenty-second of February, General Washington requested General Parsons to employ a spy. On the fourteenth of March, General Parsons answered that he had employed one, and on the twenty-fourth of April, Heron writes for the first time in his letter giving an account of his first proposing the treason to General Parsons.

The manifest conclusion from these facts, taking in connection with

his proverbial sagacity and his selection and control of instruments that General Parsons knew his man all the time and had turned him from his former employers and probably with the full knowledge of Washington. It is well known that along the line between the two armies this double espionage was a common occurrence.

To one other point I will call your attention. The inducements purporting in the correspondence to have been held out to Gen. Parsons as a reward for his treachery are offered by a subordinate individual without apparent authority, and are all vague, indefinite and ridiculous. In exchange for his command-in-chief of the Connecticut line of the continental army he is offered a position in the British army but the grade is not intimated. He is to have money, of course, "pieces of silver," but the amount is uncertain. He is to have a cask of wine, but whether a ten gallon or sixty gallon cask, and whether old Madeira or of the Jersey vintage are also left uncertain. It is suggested that he might share in the glory of Benedict Arnold, the miscreant whom he would have hung, if as was proposed, he could have been kidnapped in the manner of Gen. Prescott. Last, but not least, of the conditions of the infamous (pretended) bargain was the promotion of Gen. Parsons' son Enoch. This is twice mentioned in the correspondence and was made a *sine qua non*. He was to "be taken into the British service and sent out of the country." It was perhaps thought by British officers that the doting father secretly hoped his son might in time rival the Clives and Hastings and other great commanders, "conquerors on foreign shores and the far wave." In this proposition also the rank was left indefinite. But certainly no less an office than the command of a regiment, perhaps a brigade, would be likely to satisfy the aspirations of such a father, and pay for the risk of his life and the sacrifice of his soul.

Now who and what was this Enoch, and what had been the history of his exploits and his previous career?

By a reference to Chancellor Walworth's genealogy of the Hyde Family it will be seen that this son of General Parsons was born on the fifth of November, 1769, and so was at this time eleven years and four months old. It would seem that the sham was too transparent to deceive even "the most credulous or obtuse of the enemy." I will only add that General Parsons was the last person who would trust himself within their lines for he was the one who sent his brother-in-law, Capt. Ezra Lee of Lyme, in Bushnell's torpedo under their ship of war in the harbor of New York for which both of them if taken would have been hung, the act being then denounced as outside the pale of civilized warfare.

Yours, etc.,

CHAS. J. McCURDY.

LETTER OF HON. CHAS. S. HALL.

Binghamton, N. Y., Oct. 16, 1888.

Hon. George B. Loring.

My dear Sir:

Your "Vindication of General Samuel Holden Parsons" I have read with the greatest interest. It seems to me complete and to remove every shadow of suspicion which may have been thrown by the unexplained correspondence in "Clinton's Secret Service Record" over the reputation of an ancestor whom I have always been taught to regard as one of the most devoted and trusted leaders in the war for American independence.

A man worthy to be described as "one of the bravest and most accomplished officers of the revolutionary era;" as the "sagacious companion of Washington;" as "one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned; who first suggested the Continental Congress; from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War;" should not have been denounced as a traitor on such insufficient evidence as the letters of William Heron.

A Puritan of Puritans in his descent; possessed of high moral and intellectual qualities; a graduate of Harvard and a member of the Connecticut bar; an intimate associate of the leading spirits and himself a positive force in the revolt against Great Britain; a member of the General Assembly for eighteen years; intrusted frequently by his native state with important business; a colonel in the army at the breaking out of the war, and then successively brigadier and major general in the regular army by appointment of Congress; who planned and carried through the capture of Ticonderoga; who through his whole career, both civil and military, was distinguished for his zeal, his bold, daring and fervent patriotism, his vigilance, activity, foresight and sagacity, his determined hostility to British rule and his bitter hatred and contempt for a tory;—such a man is not the material out of which traitors are made.

His correspondence shows the lofty tone and determined, uncompromising spirit of the man.

In his letter to Samuel Adams in 1773 suggesting a Continental Congress, he writes:— "The idea of inalienable allegiance to any prince or state, is an idea to me inadmissible; and I cannot see but that our ancestors, when they first landed in America were as independent of the Crown or King of Great Britain, as if they had never been his subjects."

To the Boston committee of defence he writes in 1774, "we consider the cause the common cause of all the colonies, and doubt not the concurrence of all to defend and support you. Let us play the man

for the cause of our country, and trust the event to Him who orders all events for the best good of His people."

Governor Tryon in 1778 had burned several houses near the American lines and turned women and children half clad into the streets in a severe night. Parsons reproached him for his savage barbarity and threatened to retaliate by burning the houses of Colonel Phillips and the DeLancey family. Tryon in his answer addressed Parsons as "a revolted subject of Great Britain." Parsons, with great spirit replied, "a justifiable resistance against unwarrantable invasions of the natural and social rights of mankind, if unsuccessful, according to the fashion of the world, will be termed rebellion; but if successful, will be deemed a noble struggle for the defence of everything valuable in life. Whether I am considered as a revolted subject of the King of Great Britain, or in any other light by his subjects, is very immaterial, and gives me little concern. Future ages, I hope, will do justice to my intentions, and the present to the humanity of my conduct."

Just before he invaded Connecticut and burned Norwalk in 1779, Tryon addressed a letter to Putnam and Parsons in which in closing he exclaims, "Surely it is time for rational Americans to wish for a reunion with the parent state and to adopt such measures as will most speedily effect it." Parsons, replying, retorts, "Surely it is time for Britons to rouse from their delusive dreams of conquest, and pursue such systems of future conduct as will save their tottering empire from total destruction."

In a letter to Washington reporting the battle he had fought with Tryon and the burning of Norwalk, Parsons writes:— "A few Tory houses are left which I hope our people will burn. I imagine Stamford will be the next object to wreak their hellish malice upon."

A man with treason in his heart does not breathe this spirit. Such a man, of necessity, stands far above suspicion. The tongue of slander may revile him, but none but the clearest and most incontrovertible evidence can weigh much against him in any candid and unprejudiced mind.

It is against a man of this character that the charge of treason is brought on the strength of Heron's letters found in "Clinton's Secret Service Record." To anyone knowing Parsons, this charge is absurdity itself. His unhesitating reply would be, "these letters are not what they seem; there is unquestionably an explanation behind, which will dispel every suspicion."

The explanation comes with your recent discovery among the Washington papers of a letter written by Parsons to General Washington in April, 1782, in which he recommends William Heron as a suitable person to be employed as a spy, giving his reasons therefor and stating how useful and trustworthy he had found him in that capacity for several years.

If this letter was written in good faith by Parsons, and, in view of

the character of the man and his confidential relations with Washington, it would not be just or reasonable to infer anything to the contrary, then we must conclude that William Heron, during the period covered by his correspondence with Clinton, was a spy in the American service. This view of the case is fully supported by the circumstances you narrate in your "Vindication;" and from all we can learn it is certain that Heron did furnish information of great value to the patriot cause, while it nowhere appears that he was of any special service to Clinton.

If Heron was an American spy, then the negotiations with Parsons which he professes to detail in his letters to Clinton are purely imaginary. They are the cunning inventions of the shrewd and sagacious man Parsons describes Heron to be, and were intended as a means to gain the confidence of Clinton and create in him the belief that his informant was most zealous in the British cause and able to render efficient and valuable service.

After the defection of Arnold, Clinton seemed possessed with the idea that it would be easy to corrupt any American officer, and lost no opportunity of attempting it. Heron exhibited his shrewdness and perception of character when he held out to Clinton this bait. So credulous was Clinton, that even the absurd suggestion that Parsons could be won over by a little money, a cask of wine and a commission in the navy for his son, did not seem to strike him as suspicious.

Parsons' letter to Heron of July 8, 1781, was the final and conclusive proof which Heron presented to Clinton to convince him that he was able to fulfil his promise to enlist Parsons in the British service.

And now, as to the true character of this letter which the *Cyclopædia* publishes as proof of Parsons' disloyalty and on which those who have doubted Parsons have laid great stress.

It is now certain that this letter was not written to give information to Clinton, as was assumed before the discovery of Parsons' letter to Washington of April 6, 1782.

It may have been written to Heron as a known friend of the cause and been used by him to effect his purposes without the knowledge of Parsons. It may have been concerted between Parsons and Heron to help out the deception Heron was practising on Clinton; or it may have been forged by Heron.

It does not seem probable that Parsons wrote this letter to Heron in order that he might use it to mislead Clinton. There was a risk and impropriety in such a step, which must have suggested itself to a man of Parsons' experience, which forbids the supposition. Besides, we have no evidence that Parsons had the least suspicion of the use Heron was making of his name with Clinton, nor is it likely that this would have been permitted had it come to his knowledge.

On its face the letter is a friendly one and nothing more. And cer-

tainly, there is an entire absence of anything to indicate a consciousness of wrong doing, and a man of his character and previous associations could not have been guilty of so base an act without leaving some ear mark to betray his purpose. The clause in the letter, "As the object of the campaign is the reduction of New York, we shall now effectually try the patriotism of our countrymen who have always given us assurances of assistance when this should become the object; of this I have had my doubts for several years, and wished it put to the test," sounds like Parsons and is perfectly characteristic of him, and reads just as he would have written to Washington or Trumbull. But these ideas, while entirely natural and in place in a letter to a friend, would hardly have come to mind, much less have found expression, had he been writing a letter which he intended Heron to give to Clinton, whether to inform or mislead him.

It is worthy of note that while this letter gives no information of value to Clinton, it is careful to mention in the most incidental way that "the reduction of New York is the object of the campaign, and to get in the fact that "the Minister of France is in camp and that the French troops encamped on our left near the Tuckahoe road."

Lafayette at this time had succeeded in forcing Cornwallis down the Peninsula and everything else had been postponed to give him aid. Clinton was firm in his belief that New York and not Yorktown was the object of the preparations in the Highlands, and it was of the highest importance at this juncture that he should not be undeceived. What so well calculated to confirm him in his opinion, as the concentration of the French troops opposite his lines, and to lead him to think the danger imminent, as that the French Minister deemed the occasion important enough to warrant his presence in camp. The result was, as probably intended, that Clinton not only refused to reinforce Cornwallis but ordered to New York three thousand of his troops.

The artful way these facts are brought into the letter furnishes the strongest evidence of a careful preparation with intent to mislead. It may be merely a coincidence, but such pains are taken to state these facts, and they were so likely to have impressed Clinton, that it is not improbable that this letter was the handiwork of Heron and part of his elaborate scheme of deception.

Heron in his letter enclosing Parsons' letter to Clinton, in a postscript, very significantly says, "I thought it advisable to cut the name off the enclosed." Clinton was probably acquainted with the signature of Parsons, although he may not have known his handwriting, and if this letter was a forgery, it was prudent of Heron to remove the signature to prevent detection.

It seems certain that this letter was either written to Heron as a

friend and used by him without authority, or else was forged by Heron; and one supposition is perhaps as likely to be true as the other; but it is immaterial which, so far as Parsons' fame is concerned.

It is unfortunate that Heron's real character was not known at the time his letters were discovered, and the charge which they seemingly implied thus prevented from going into the histories. These letters were of course a surprise even to Parsons' friends, and an explanation would naturally be sought for; but, as against the character and whole life of the man, they were not even *prima facie* evidence, and no one should have doubted for a moment that an explanation would in time be forthcoming. Thanks to your researches, the mystery is cleared up and the question I trust put to rest.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES S. HALL.

LETTER OF GEN. W. T. SHERMAN.

75 West 71st Street,
New York, Oct. 25, 1888.

HON. GEORGE B. LORING, SALEM, MASS.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Your kind note of Oct. 24, 1888, is just received, and I shall be complimented by the dedication of the pamphlet you name, the vindication of General Parsons of the Revolutionary army and a prominent member of the Ohio Land Company which did so much to shape the destiny of the great northwest. . . .

No man can escape calumny if he be a man of purpose and earnestness. . . .

I was raised to venerate the names of Generals Rufus Putnam, Tupper, Parsons, etc., and especially that of Chaplain Manasseh Cutler. My recollection is that General Parsons was of Connecticut, and that he was of the committee chosen by the Ohio company whose headquarters were at Boston, to go in person to New York and urge on Congress the justice and wisdom of the purpose to found a new state northwest of the Ohio River.

Always your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

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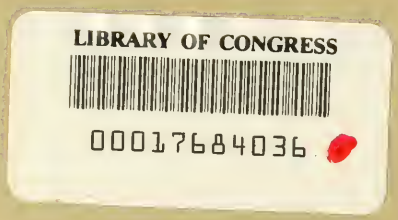
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